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ABSTRACT

An item dispensing system having an item dispenser, a controller and a fault store for storing fault thresholds and faults. A true state of a fault is stored in the fault store in response to an operating state of the item dispensing system being equal to the fault threshold, and an alarm is generated in response to the true state of the fault. The fault thresholds can represent operating states that normally lead to the item dispensing system going out of service, for example, a low dispenser inventory. The item dispensing system is connected to a communications link and a computer and the alarm is provided to the computer to facilitate a servicing of the item dispensing system. A method of operating such an item dispensing system and associated network is also provided.